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Arizona Water Initiative Northwest Basins Planning Area Meeting Summary

Date: September 8, 2016
Time: 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Location: Medical Professional Center of Kingman
on the campus of Kingman Regional Medical Center
Cerbat & Hualapai Conference Rooms
1739 Beverly Ave.
Kingman, Arizona 86409

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a. ADWR Northwest Basins Planning Area Coordinator John Riggins opened the meeting by welcoming stakeholders and describing the structure of the meeting.

2. Presentation: Northwest Basins Planning Area Background Information

- a. Mr. Riggins presented an overview of the background information for the Northwest Basins Planning Area that was published in *Arizona's Strategic Vision for Water Supply Sustainability* (Strategic Vision).
- b. The presentation included a summary of the data published in previous studies, including the Water Resources Development Commission Final Report (WRDC) and the Strategic Vision.
 - o The presentation also included a description of the location of the planning area, the composition of land ownership (a majority of the land is under federal ownership), identification of ecological resources in the area, and a description of existing water supplies and water management entities, including the Mohave County Water Authority.

3. Discussion Regarding Changes, Additions, and Updates to Background Information and general comment and discussion

- a. Mr. Riggins stated that ADWR is seeking input from stakeholders as to whether water demand data for the planning area contained in the Strategic Vision needs to be updated.
- b. Stakeholders offered the following comments regarding the information presented and water challenges within the Northwest Basins:
 - o A stakeholder asked for clarification on which Planning Areas are actively being addressed by ADWR and mentioned that certain information, specific to the Peach Springs Basin needs to be updated. Mr. Riggins explained that the Peach Springs Basin is

- outside the Northwest Basins Planning Area boundary and that ADWR staff would follow up on updating any incorrect information.
- A stakeholder requested an explanation of the details regarding the Mohave County Water Authority's acquisition of the City of Kingman's Colorado River allotment. ADWR Deputy Assistant Director, Gerry Walker explained some of the details of the restructured Mohave County Water Authority allotment.
 - A stakeholder commented that private groundwater studies had been completed in the past for the Hualapai Basin and should be considered for updating data sets.
 - A stakeholder commented that a recent request was sent to the ADWR Director from the Mohave County Board of Supervisors regarding designating the Hualapai Basin as an irrigation non-expansion area (INA) and asked ADWR to explain the differences between an INA and an active management area (AMA). ADWR Deputy Council, Jennifer Heim, and Ms. Walker provided the details of INAs and AMAs. [Link to AMA and INA overview](#). Ms. Heim further explained that the Board's request to the Director does not legally obligate the Director to initiate INA procedures or otherwise trigger any legal requirements. Ms. Heim also explained that ADWR will respond to Mohave County's letter and is reviewing factual information in its possession. Ms. Heim explained that the Director's response will not constitute a decision on whether or not to designate an INA but rather will notify the Board as to whether ADWR believes it appropriate for ADWR to initiate designation procedures.
 - A stakeholder asked if an area is designated as an AMA, would individuals that have tilled their land for agricultural use be issued grandfathered water rights if they have not actually applied water to the land. Ms. Walker explained that individuals who can demonstrate that they have made a substantial capital investment to put the land to an irrigation use within the five-year period before procedures to initiate an AMA are commenced may be issued grandfathered rights.
 - A stakeholder commented regarding the historical water use in the Northwest Basins and how the recent agriculture is impacting the Basin's water supplies.
 - A stakeholder asked if the City of Kingman is the largest municipality in the Planning Area. Mr. Riggins responded that the City of Kingman is the largest municipality in the Planning Area and is also the largest municipality for any of the current active Planning Areas (Cochise and West Basins).
 - A stakeholder commented that currently there are four large farming operations in the Long Mountain area (Hualapai Basin).
 - A stakeholder asked if Mohave County could require irrigation systems to include a monitoring well that the county and state would have access to and allow for building comprehensive data sets to update groundwater data within the basins.

4. Presentation: Summary of Previously Identified Mitigation Strategies

- a. Mr. Riggins provided the presentation on previously identified mitigation strategies which included the strategies highlighted in the Strategic Vision and strategies addressed during the public comment portion of the first meeting (June 29, 2016). Stakeholders discussed the following regarding mitigation strategies and general comment:
 - A stakeholder commented that the City of Kingman published a wastewater study in February 2016 which identified three options for reclaimed water use. The stakeholder also commented that there are 300,000 gallons of wastewater that could be used a day with improved municipal infrastructure. The stakeholder commented that the City could conserve groundwater by utilizing the wastewater and A+ quality water available.
 - A stakeholder commented about evapotranspiration of water used in agriculture and other water sources such as rainwater capture in cisterns and altering stream runoff to capture water for water use.
 - A stakeholder asked how many groundwater monitor wells are in the Northwest Basins. Mr. Riggins explained that in 2006, 494 groundwater index wells were monitored during years when index well measurements are taken by ADWR. Mr. Riggins then explained the next ADWR Groundwater Index Well measurement (well sweep) will be conducted in the Northwest Basins Planning Area in the fall of 2017.
 - A stakeholder asked if anyone from the Red Lake area (Hualapai Basin) had offered their well to be measured as part of the Groundwater Site Index well process conducted by ADWR. Mr. Riggins stated he would speak with ADWR Hydrology Division regarding the question.
 - A stakeholder commented about working with Mohave County to create some kind of irrigation ordinance and contact the City of Kingman to work towards utilizing their reclaimed water resources.
 - A stakeholder commented that the Governor's Water Augmentation Council (GWAC) should look at new laws to stop the practicing of grandfathering water rights and establish metering on irrigation systems in the rural areas.
 - A stakeholder commented that the GWAC might need to start looking at revamping laws regarding groundwater.
 - A stakeholder commented that Mohave County has required county parks to use A+ reclaimed water and that concept should be considered as a mitigation strategy.
 - A stakeholder commented that ADWR should utilize public forums in which multiple government agencies and groups come together to share data and provide information regarding water supply and demand issues.
 - A stakeholder asked ADWR to increase the frequency in which it measures monitor wells in the Northwest Basins Planning Area and asked why well surveys are conducted in the fall. Mr. Riggins and Ms. Walker explained that this period was selected by ADWR Field Services staff because water levels are static at this time, which improves the reliability of the data.
 - A stakeholder suggested looking at the possibilities of groundwater recharge as a mitigation strategy and also creating a groundwater model for the basins to show an accurate groundwater impact analysis.
 - A stakeholder commented that the water level decline had existed before the farms had arrived in the North West Basins Planning Area and that the basins have been in deficit since 1976.
 - A stakeholder suggested that mitigation strategies need to include retention basins into Red Lake because of the evaporation.

- A stakeholder suggested the use of retention basins in the washes flowing from the Cerbat Mountains (Truxton Wash).

5. 15-minute Intermission

6. Presentation of Existing Water Demand Data

- Mr. Riggins provided a brief overview of the existing water demand data for the Northwest Basins Planning Area, which is largely derived from the WRDC studies and published within the Strategic Vision. Mr. Riggins explained that stakeholders would have an opportunity to discuss water demand for the three water use sectors (agriculture, municipal and industrial) and offer any comments or questions they may have to staff during the discussion breakout groups.

7. Discussion Demand Sector Data (Agriculture, Industrial and Municipal Sectors)

- At table groups, stakeholders discussed the information presented and offered their ideas and suggestions to ADWR staff. Stakeholders discussed and suggested the following regarding water demand use for each sector. The following list of stakeholder suggestions denotes statements made to ADWR during the discussion portion of the meeting and does not indicate ADWR support or endorsement of any particular statement.

b. Agriculture Water Demand Data Table

- Statement that a large farming operation had provided their projected water use to Mohave County in 2014.
- Statement identifying five large farming operations in the Northwest Basins Planning Area within the Hualapai and Sacramento Basins
- Question whether Mohave County can regulate irrigation and require agricultural water use monitoring.
- Statement that an assessment of a large farming operation in the Hualapai Basin determined that each center-pivot used 4,000 AF/Year and that the farming operations had an estimated annual water use of 90,000 AF/Year.
- The following solutions were suggested by stakeholders to mitigate aquifer depletion. All solutions noted below had a general consensus at the Agriculture Water Demand Table:
 - Work with the Bureau of Land Management to approve repair/maintenance permits for existing retention dams for ranchers on leased federal land.
 - Create a threshold for groundwater pumping (maximum volume limitations).
 - Create a groundwater pump tax.

c. Industrial Water Demand Data Table

- Discussion of Mineral Park Mining operations and its current status as limited operations.
 - As identified by stakeholders, this limited mining operation reduced water use by an estimated 50-60% peak water use (stated as 5,500-5,600 acre-feet/year).
- Suggestion to look at past power/water uses to update mining water use and demand use data.
- Statement that water usage for mines fluctuates with copper prices.
- Griffith Energy stated the plant is only used as a peak supply plant and only runs when additional power/capacity is needed.
 - This period of operation was estimated to be 4-5 months/year.

- Statement that the Chloride Mine and others were currently not operational.
- Statement identifying the following as potential industrial water users:
 - Feed lots, industrial gas companies, concrete processing plants, airport industrial users, steel processing, microbreweries, motor sport activities, Interstate 11 construction.
- Proposal for legislation that creates reporting requirements for future and/or existing large industrial users.

d. **Municipal Water Demand Data Table**

- Proposal for required groundwater monitoring.
- Suggestion to use Community Water System and Arizona Corporation Commission water usage provided in their respective annual reports to establish the Gallons Per capita Per Day for municipal water use data updates.

8. Closing Remarks

- a. Staff thanked the groups for attendance, participation, and feedback. Stakeholder contributions will be organized and individuals will be notified by email when the next meeting is scheduled.
- b. Mr. Riggins thanked everyone for his and her participation and stated that if anyone had any additional information, suggestions or questions that they can be directed to John Riggins at jrriggins@azwater.gov or (602)771-4782.

***Meeting Attendance: 93**